

PRACTICAL SOUVENIR COMPETITION HATS

The invention relates to hats that commemorate a particular sporting event or other competition and designate the rivals or contenders through the use of a unique combination of visors, colors and logos.

Field of the Invention

Hats serve many purposes and functions. They may protect the wearer's head, eyes and nape from natural elements, including wind, rain and sun, as well as from trauma of a blunt or sharp nature. One such hat, a baseball-style cap, generally consists of a hemispherical crown or dome portion that fits on the wearer's head plus a single visor or bill that attaches to and projects outwardly from the front region of the crown or dome. The crown is composed of a plurality of substantially triangular fabric or leather sections or panels called gores that are joined laterally by seams. A fabric headband is circumferentially attached along the inner base of the crown to provide structural support while facilitating the engagement of the wearer's head. Occasionally, the headband fabric is selected to provide either absorption of forehead and scalp perspiration or elasticity for adjustability of fit or both.

Such caps are used by athletes in the course of their games and by fans or supporters to demonstrate their team loyalties or affiliations as best reflected in the use of team colors and various indicia, usually located on the front of the crown of the cap just above the insertion of the visor element or on the upper surface of the visor itself. The economic pressure to reduce marketers' inventory volumes has prompted the evolution of caps or hats that may be adjusted to fit a plurality of head sizes.

Description of the Prior Art

For nearly a century, many have described the use of caps, hats or visors, with or without nape coverings, to protect wearers from the effects of the sun's glare and

radiation. Rochet, No. 822,986; Silverstein, No. 1,816,346; Lipkin, No. 4,622,007; Shedd, No. 5,081,717; Shorts, No. 5,161,259; and Oates, No. 5,091,995 taught about caps with detachable nape or neck flaps. Klein, No. 1,648,551; Leibson, No. 1,677,187; and Robinson, No. 5,253,364 introduced caps and sun visors with single visors or bills that were movable from the front to the rear of the cap or sun visor. Though Oates, No. 5,091,995 described a two-brim sporting hat, those brims were made of mesh material to achieve water buoyancy and to minimize air resistance. They overlapped each other and were neither symmetric nor functionally interchangeable.

Recent efforts to achieve cap adjustability have focused on the use of uni-axially or bi-axially expandable or elastic materials: Lipkin, No. 4,662,007; Beckerman, No. 5,615,415; Cho, No. 5,715,540; and Cunliffe, No. 5,966,742 suggested that the rear gores of the crown consist of a uni-axially stretchable material. Beckerman, No. 5,615,415; Cho, No. 5,715,540; and Green, No. 5,632, 046 called for a headband with a uni-axially stretchable component while Cunliffe, No. 5,966,742; and Lee, No. 6,347,410 described a bi-axially stretchable, sweat absorbent headband. In all instances, headband elasticity extended circumferentially, but did not include the area at the front of the crown where the visor is attached.

Cap wearers have customarily identified with a particular competitive event and/or with one sports team or another by the fabric colors and the names and/or logos that are painted, embossed or detachably affixed to the front of the crown or to the upper surface of the visor. To facilitate a wearer's ability to identify with more than one team on more than one occasion, Proctor, No. 5,862,523; and Tapia, Nos. 4,873,726 and 5,070,545 taught about the detachable application of indicia or logos to the front crown of a cap or modular headwear system while Connelly, No. 5,410,761 described the placement of pictorial displays on an insert located in the upper surface of the visor.

None of the prior art provides for a baseball-style cap or hat that concurrently incorporates all of the following: (1) two identical fixed visors or bills, functionally interchangeable, positioned opposite to each other, without overlap, that provide shade

for both the eyes and the neck of the wearer; (2) an adjustable feature to allow the fitting of a plurality of head sizes which involves the use of stretchable material in the lateral, not rear or circumferential, aspects of both the crown and the headband, (3) a harlequin or half and half color scheme and a permanent twin logos mounting format that depict, simultaneously, two opponents or contenders in a competition that is also memorialized by (4) a third, laterally placed event logo, (5) a fourth contra-laterally placed event year and location marker and (6) a built in mechanism for reversing fan loyalty or affiliation that involves a simple front to rear rotation of the cap.

Summary of the Invention

The present invention provides a baseball-style competition cap or hat that commemorates a special sporting event, such as the Super Bowl, or other competition by name and/or symbol, date (year) and location. It further identifies the two opponents/contenders in the event or competition by their respective color(s), names and/or logos that mark one half of the crown and the particular visor attached to it. The cap or hat adjusts in size to accommodate a plurality of head sizes. It simultaneously shades the wearer's eyes and neck from the sun. As such, it is both a functional and a decorative souvenir of the competition.

The invention provides a baseball-style cap or hat that consists of a crown portion, a headband and two visors. The crown comprises a multiple of substantially triangular fabric panels or gores that are seamed together along their lateral edges to form a dome to fit over the wearer's head. The laterally located gores consist of a bi-axially stretchable material. The fabric of the front one half of the crown is in the color(s) of one contender while the rear half is in the color(s) of the opponent. A non-stretchable fabric headband, with laterally incorporated segments of a bi-axially stretchable material, is circumferentially attached to the inner lower perimeter surface of the crown. Two functionally interchangeable, identically shaped and sized visors or bills, made of substantially rigid material, are positioned opposite to each other at the front and at the rear base of the crown. Their respective color(s) schemes are the same as those of the

respective crown regions to which they are attached. These visors are separated on each side by that portion of the perimeter of the base of the crown that is faced with the stretchable portions of the headband.

On the crown portion immediately above the front visor insertion, the name and/or logo of the team or contender represented by its respective color(s) is attached, painted, embossed, monogrammed or otherwise non-detachably affixed; the name and/or logo of the opposing team or contender is similarly affixed to the crown portion above the rear visor. On one lateral aspect of the crown portion, the name and/or symbol of the competition, e.g., the Super Bowl, is attached, painted, embossed, monogrammed or non-detachably affixed. On the opposite lateral aspect of the crown portion, the date (year) and, possibly, the location of the competition are similarly affixed.

In a variation of the invention, the laterally located gores consist of a uni-axially stretchable material.

In another variation of the invention, the laterally incorporated segments of the headband consist of a uni-axially stretchable material.

In still another variation of the invention, both the lateral gores and the laterally incorporated segments of the headband consist of uni-axially stretchable material.

In yet another variation of the invention, the cap colors and the affixed set of name and/or logo represent a single team in the subject competition.

In another discernible variation of the invention, the cap colors and the affixed name and/or logo depict a single team or contender without reference to a particular competitive event.

In another distinctive variation of the invention, a non-adjustable version of the cap, all gore panels and the entire headband are made of non-elastic material.

In a different variation of the invention, the hat consists of a non-domed crown portion, a headband and a broad non-rigid circumferential brim. The crown portion consists of a fabric tip and side cover the interior base of which is attached circumferentially to the fabric headband that laterally incorporates segments of uni-axially or bi-axially stretchable material. The exterior base of the crown portion is attached circumferentially to a broad brim comprised of substantially oval or circular shaped fabric that is reinforced by stiffeners that are attached by concentric rows of stitching. The fabric of the front one half of the non-domed crown and of the broad brim is in the color(s) of one contender while the rear half is in the color(s) of the opponent. On the front crown portion immediately above the attachment of the broad brim, the name and/or logo of the team or contender represented by its respective color(s) is attached, painted, embossed, monogrammed or otherwise non-detachably affixed; the name and/or logo of the opposing team or contender is similarly affixed to the rear crown portion above the broad brim attachment. On one lateral aspect of the crown portion, the name and/or symbol of the competition, e.g., the Super Bowl, is attached, painted, embossed, monogrammed or otherwise non-detachably affixed. On the opposite lateral aspect of the crown portion, the date (year) and, possibly, the location of the competition are similarly affixed.

Brief Description of the Drawings

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the present invention on a model's head.

FIG 2 is one side elevation view of the present invention illustrating the logos and color shadings that distinguish the contenders plus the symbol of the subject competition.

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the present invention in an inverted position demonstrating the stretchable lateral segment of the headband and the stretchable lateral gores of the crown portion of the adjustable cap.

FIG 4 is a top view of the present invention illustrating the cap shown in FIG. 2 with the additional display of the year of the subject competition.

FIG. 5a is a front elevation view of the present invention illustrating the logo and non-shaded coloring of one team or contender.

FIG. 5b is a rear elevation view of the present invention illustrating the logo and shaded coloring of the other team or contender.

FIG. 6a is one side elevation view of the hat version of the present invention illustrating the logos and color shadings that distinguish the contenders plus the symbol of the subject competition.

FIG. 6b is a top, angled view of the hat shown in FIG. 6a illustrating the broad circumferential brim.

FIG. 6c is an under view of the hat in FIG 6a, demonstrating the stretchable lateral segments of the headband.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

FIGS. 1 through 5b of the drawings offer perspective views of an adjustable baseball-style double-billed competition cap **1** according to the first preferred embodiment of the present invention. The cap **1** consists of a crown portion **2** that covers or crowns the top of the wearer's head. This hemispheric or domed crown portion **8** is formed by the lateral seaming, from apex to base, of a plurality of substantially triangular fabric panels or gores **3**. The circular opening or base of the crown has both an outer surface **5** and an inner surface **4** of the lower peripheral edge **7** to which an elongated rectangular fabric strip is circumferentially attached to form a headband **21**. The fabric material of the headband is symmetrically interrupted in its lateral aspect by the insertion of segments of stretchable material **22** to facilitate the adjustment of the cap **1** to fit a

plurality of head sizes. The two lateral gores **11**, not the rear gores **13** or the front gores **12**, also consist of a stretchable material that further contributes to the adjustability of the cap **1**.

The stretchable materials making up the two laterally inserted segments of the headband **22** and the two laterally positioned gores **11** are preferably bi-axially stretchable, that is, simultaneously stretchable in a diagonal as well as a horizontal direction. Bi-axial stretch ability of the material is achieved when the fabric is woven from perpendicular warp and weft yarns consisting of a variety of polyester and rubber blends.

The front **12** and rear **13** gore sections that comprise the front and rear portions of the crown are backed by several layers of material to add support and shape to the front and rear sections of the crown portion **2**.

Two functionally interchangeable, identically shaped and sized visors or bills **9**, **10**, made of substantially rigid material, are attached to the outer surface **5** of the lower peripheral edge of the crown **7** at positions exactly opposite to each other at the front **9** and at the rear **10** of the crown. The visors **9**, **10** are separated on each side by that portion of the lower peripheral edge of the crown **7** that is faced with the stretchable portions **22** of the headband.

The fabric of the exterior surface **5** of the front one half section of the crown portion **2** and the upper surface of its respective attached visor is in the color(s) of one contender **14**; the fabric of the exterior surface **5** of the rear one half section of the crown portion **2** with its attached visor is in the color(s) of the other contender **15**. The color of the fabric covering the under surface of the front visor **19** and the rear visor **20** may have a light absorbing or reflecting quality and, therefore, need not be the same as that of the upper surface.

On the front section of the crown portion **2**, immediately above the point of insertion of the front visor **9**, the name and/or logo (indicia) **16** of the team or contender represented by its respective color(s) **14** is attached, painted, embossed, monogrammed or otherwise non-detachably affixed; the name and/or logo (indicia) **17** of the opposing team or contender is similarly affixed to the rear section of the crown portion **2** above the insertion of the rear visor **10**.

On one lateral aspect of the crown portion **2**, the name and/or symbol **18** of the competition, e.g., the Super Bowl, is attached, painted, embossed, monogrammed or otherwise non-detachably affixed.

On the other and opposite lateral aspect of the crown portion **2**, the date (year) **23** of the competition and, possibly, the location **24** of the competition are similarly affixed.

In a variation of the invention, the laterally located gores **11** consist of uni-axially stretchable material.

In another variation of the invention, the laterally incorporated segments of the headband consist of a uni-axially stretchable material **22**.

In still another variation of the invention, both the lateral gores **11** and the laterally incorporated segments of the headband **22** consist of uni-axially stretchable material.

In yet another variation of the invention, the cap colors **14** and the affixed set of name and/or logo **16** represent a single team in the subject competition **18**.

In another discernible variation of the invention, the cap colors **14** and the affixed name and/or logo **16** depict a single team or contender without reference to a particular competitive event.

In another distinctive variation of the invention, a non-adjustable version of the cap **1**, all gore panels, **11**, **12** and **13**, and the entire headband **21** are made of non-elastic material.

FIGS. 6a through 6c of the drawings offer perspective views of an adjustable competition hat **25** according to the second preferred embodiment of the present invention. In this variation of the invention, the hat **25** consists of a non-domed crown portion **26**, a headband **28** and a broad non-rigid oval or circular circumferential brim **27**. The non-domed crown portion **26** is comprised of a fabric tip **34** and side cover **35**. The interior base **30** of the crown portion **26** is attached circumferentially to the fabric headband **28** that laterally incorporates segments of bi-axially stretchable material **29**. The exterior base **31** of the crown portion **26** is attached circumferentially to a broad brim **27** that is reinforced by stiffeners that are attached by concentric rows of stitching **6**. The fabric of the front one half of the non-domed crown portion **26** and of the broad brim **27** is in the color(s) of one contender **32** while the fabric of the rear one half of the crown **26** portion and of the attached broad brim **27** is in the color(s) of the opponent **33**.

On the front of the non-domed crown portion **26** immediately above the attachment of the broad circumferential brim **27**, the name and/or logo **16** of the team or contender represented by its respective color(s) **32** is attached, painted, embossed, monogrammed or otherwise non-detachably affixed; the name and/or logo **17** of the opposing team or contender is similarly affixed to the non-domed crown portion **26** above the broad brim **27** attachment.

In a variation of the second preferred embodiment of the present invention, an adjustable competition hat **25**, the laterally incorporated segments of the headband consist of uni-axially stretchable material **29**.

In another variation of the second preferred embodiment of the present invention, a non-adjustable competition hat **25**, there is no laterally incorporated segment of stretchable material and the entire headband is made of a non-stretchable material.

Although the preferred embodiments of the invention with the methods of use have been described with considerable specificity, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that modifications, changes and adaptations may be made to the disclosed embodiments without departing from the scope of the invention which should be determined by the appended claims and their legal equivalents.